

STATINTL

An Answer to the Critics of CIA

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To its critics, the United States Central Intelligence Agency is a subverter of America's collegiate youth and a destroyer of the nation's image abroad.

But there are those who maintain that the CIA—*forbidden by law to defend itself*—is being used as a "fall guy," a mute blame-taker for past Congressional mistakes.

World Journal Tribune reporter Dan Brigham, seeking the intelligence services' view on recent disclosures about the CIA, talked with officers of the nation's intelligence operations. He also interviewed high-ranking officials, past and present, who cleared the activities of these organizations, and spoke with public contacts in the CIA itself.

In this report, he reveals as much of the other side of the CIA story as authorities will allow under the existing regulations.

By DAN BRIGHAM

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24—

"In the craft of intelligence—diplomatic or military—there are no tears for the loser. He dies as he lived—praised, if successful; repudiated if he's caught . . . sometimes reviled by his own for having done his best, which was often more than had been hoped."

There was bitterness in the voice of the old-timer, a respected and well-known public name, now retired but still unable to speak for the record.

The same bitterness was in the voices of others. But these voices spoke in the labyrinthine fastness of the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in Langley, Va., and in the offices of this country's eight other official intelligence agencies, all of which are coordinated by the director of CIA.

Men who make a business of secrecy made no secret of their resentment of criticism of the CIA. To them, the blame was misplaced.

In replying to the attacks, in pinpointing responsibility, they raised the names of Robert F. Kennedy and Sen. J. William Fulbright, the Arkansas Democrat.

In explaining how the CIA was laid bare to the latest charges of subverting youth and destroying America's image overseas, the intelligence experts cited:

• Policy decisions beyond CIA control.
• Political expedience in

charging subversion of college students.

• Failure by those who could have come to the agency's defense to do so.

By law and by preference Richard McGarrah Helms, the 53-year-old CIA director, takes the blame in official silence when something goes wrong. Others, who may be responsible, are secure in the knowledge that he cannot answer.

VERY HUMAN

Helms wouldn't be human if he didn't want to talk back. He's very human.

Thus he might have cried "politics" to charges by Fulbright that student subsidies through the National Student Assn. had gone "much too far . . . and should be examined in depth, together with all other CIA operations."

Most intelligence officials willing to talk found Fulbright's charges the most difficult to accept. Fulbright has been regarded as a principal hardener of all CIA operations for the past 18 months. It was a year and a half ago that Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., chairman of the 12-member special joint congressional committee that keeps an eye on all CIA operations, rejected Fulbright's bid for more participation in CIA councils. He made the bid by virtue of his position as chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee.

'KNEW BETTER'

At the time, Fulbright maintained that such access was his prerogative "since foreign policy was formulated there." Russell's reply was: "He knew better."

"Sure, he knew better," said a top intelligence expert. "But it sure looked good on the record. Fulbright has sat in on and been briefed on foreign policy blueprinting far too often not to have known."

"Just as he and most of the other congressional critics know their blasts at alleged subversion of academic freedom have absolutely no foundation in fact," added a high-ranking administration aide.

It was noted that critics now involvement in student activi-

ties—a request for cash help from a small (17 member)

group of students just returned from the Communist-sponsored "youth festival" at Prague in 1947.

In the intelligence community, it is remembered that it was Fulbright who rejected out of hand all proposals to handle the student subsidy program through the State Department's Fulbright Scholarship machinery.

"And he rejected the proposal, mind you," a State Department officer said. "In full knowledge that the objective of the government funding was to send abroad unbriefed and uncoerced students from American campuses for display."

BASED ON FEAR

He added: "Prior to this arrangement, the only 'Americans' that had been seen at those youth congresses had been 'students' hand-picked by left-wing groups both here in the U.S., and from American colonies abroad, who would and did parrot the party line unchallenged."

"Our objective was to display an uncoerced group as a counterweight for the West."

Fulbright's objections, according to recent studies by intelligence analysts, were based on his fear that use of Fulbright funds to send the students aboard might reflect on the "sincerity" of the Fulbright scholars.

One intelligence old-timer recalled, "The senator himself was one of the first, if not the first to recommend that the student financing be given to the U.S. Information Agency, or to the then newly organized CIA . . . and let them worry about how it is to be done."

Fulbright's position as member (from January 1949) and ultimately chairman (February, 1959) of the foreign relations committee enabled him to keep a finger on the student funding operation right through the last Soviet-sponsored "festival" in Helsinki, Finland, in 1962.

That youth congress ended in such a fiasco that none has been scheduled since. It also marked a turning point in